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RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CHISINAU 000872

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STATE FOR EUR/UMB

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/29/2018

TAGS: PGOV PREL PHUM PBTS MD

SUBJECT: MOLDOVA OPPOSES RECOGNITION OF SOUTH OSSETIA AND ABKHAZIA

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Kelly A. Keiderling for reasons
1.4(b) and (d)

Ref: STATE 91894

¶11. (U) This is an action request. See paragraph 8.

¶12. (C) Summary: In an August 28 meeting Minister for Reintegration Vasile Sova stressed categorically that Moldova would not recognize South Ossetia or Abkhazia. President Voronin emerged from his August 25 meeting with Medvedev believing that the Russian president understood that a peaceful solution to the Transnistrian (TN) conflict was needed. Sova assured us that Moldova had not and would not agree to a Kozak-like agreement, and underscored Moldova's commitment only to a resolution based upon Moldova's 2005 law regarding Transnistria's future status. He requested that the USG review once again the documents of the Moldovan settlement package and provide any written commentary by late September. End Summary.

Moldova Opposes Recognition of Abkhazia, South Ossetia

¶13. (C) In an August 28 meeting with Minister for Reintegration Vasile Sova, Charge d'Affaires delivered reftel talking points. Minister Sova told Charge that Moldova categorically opposed recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Such recognition would directly affect Moldova's own situation with Transnistria. (Note: The GOM issued a statement on August 29 "considering that international recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia would not lead to stabilizing the situation." This carefully worded statement reflects Moldova's difficult balancing act: opposing the use of force to resolve conflicts, refusing to recognize the independence of separatist regions, and being careful not to irritate Russia, which Moldova needs for a TN settlement. End note.)

Voronin Believes Medvedev Wants TN Resolution

¶14. (C) Sova said that though he had accompanied President Voronin to Sochi, Voronin had met with Medvedev one-on-one. Based upon what Voronin had told him, Sova reported that the meeting had gone well. Voronin was satisfied that Medvedev supported a final resolution of the Transnistrian conflict. When Voronin asked Medvedev whether Russia had "fundamental objections" to Moldova's package, Sova reported that Medvedev said no, though more details and a mechanism had to be worked out.

¶15. (C) Sova underscored that Voronin and Medvedev had not/not agreed to a Kozak-2 resolution of Transnistria. Irritated by the international community's suspicions of his motives, Voronin told Sova to inform everyone who asked at the August 27 national-day reception that he had not agreed to any Kozak proposal. Sova cautioned us not to suspect Voronin of being involved in secret deals with the Russians. Sova reaffirmed Moldova's commitment instead to a settlement in conformity with the 2005 law. While noting that the 2005 law had some points in common with Kozak, Sova said that the key differences were that the 2005 law did not allow a Russian military presence for 20 years, nor a bicameral parliament, nor veto power for Transnistria.

¶ 16. (C) Sova said that the 2005 law received extensive support from the political parties and hence any agreement based upon it would have broad domestic support. He said that the law provided the basic principles for a settlement (i.e., Transnistria as a territorial structure within Moldova that could have its own constitution and parliament), though further details would need to be spelled out. The GOM's package of documents for a TN settlement contained additional details on issues such as a banking system and currency.

Moldova Will Not Rush

¶ 17. (C) Sova stressed that the GOM would not rush to settlement. It was more important that the results be "correct and acceptable," than that a settlement be achieved quickly. (Comment: We note that this idea about not rushing represents a significant shift from Sova's prior statements, in which he spoke repeatedly about trying to get an accord resolved in time for the elections. On August 27, President Voronin, too, said the GOM would seek a resolution to Transnistria until the end of this year, then would pause during the campaign season and restart after the elections. End Comment.)

Action Request: Please Review Package Documents

¶ 18. (C) Sova noted that the package document had already been presented to all the 3-plus-2 participants. The U.S. and EU had responded in writing, but the other members had not. Sova seeks written responses from all 3-plus-2 parties by late September. Sova asked the USG to review the package again, and respond in writing with any additional comments or recommendations.

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Comment

¶ 19. (C) It seems Russia has established a two-track policy: recognizing the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia while encouraging a peaceful resolution in Transnistria. Voronin and his advisors believe that Russia still intends to work toward a resolution of the Transnistrian conflict, though their more cautious selves recognize that a final resolution may still take a few years to reach. In a separate conversation, Sova mused that Russia may want to resolve Transnistria to "rehabilitate" its image internationally. We're not so sanguine.

KEIDERLING